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14 April 1981

NET ASSESSMENTS OF THE MILITARY BALANCE

"11. During the past several years there has been considerable controversy concerning the preparation by the intelligence community of "net assessments" of the US-USSR military balance. A similar controversy can be expected with respect to any proposal that the intelligence community prepare "measures of effectiveness" of conventional forces as a way of analyzing the conventional military balance in different parts of the world."

Comment:

1. In the debate about net assessments in the last several years DoD intelligence agencies have contended that interaction analyses involving the use of data on US forces and capabilities are net assessments beyond the purview of intelligence. In practice, DoD agencies have not taken issue with all net assessments, but have objected to those which they felt had been given undue emphasis.

2. The proscription of net assessments in NIEs would be contrary to the nature of the estimating process. All estimates of future developments are at least in part the end product of interaction analyses or net assessments. Estimates are predictions based on a systematic evaluation of the likely interactions of key determinants of future developments. US policies, intentions, military forces and capabilities are among the important determinants in the evaluation process. The US element of the analyses may be revealed in intelligence estimates only by oblique references or may be expressed explicitly as in comparisons of US and Soviet forces.

3. Intelligence estimates contain several types of net assessments:

--Political estimates of the future policies of foreign nations--the product of complex interactions of the policies, intentions and capabilities of a number of nations including those of the United States.

--Estimates of the technical characteristics of individual foreign weapon systems based on simulations of the interaction of the weapon system against US targets.

--Estimates of the military balance of two foreign powers--not involving US forces--such as the Sino-Soviet military balance.

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--Estimates of the capabilities of a foreign military force to perform a given military mission, some of which involve computer simulations of US and Soviet force interaction, such as Soviet capabilities to destroy US ICBM silos or to destroy US offensive forces in a first strike.

The producers of national intelligence have stopped far short of making net assessments of such things as the balance of US and Soviet military power, of the NATO-Warsaw Pact military balance or the balance of power on Korean Peninsula.

**Question:** "Should the intelligence community attempt to assess the military balance?"

**Answer:** The DCI and the CIA should not be constrained from conducting any form of analyses deemed essential to the production of national intelligence, including the use of measures of effectiveness or computer simulations of the interaction of forces to gain insights into military balances. National intelligence issuances have already included measures of effectiveness of Soviet capabilities, such as civil defense, ASW and low altitude air defenses. For purposes of producing national intelligence the CIA, with assistance of other agencies, if possible, should continue current efforts to develop measures of effectiveness for use in depicting trends in the NATO-Warsaw Pact military balance and in Soviet capabilities to carry out certain missions.

**Question:** "How should the role of the intelligence community in this area be distinguished from that of, for example, the Office of Net Assessments in DoD or the Rand Corporation?"

**Answer:** It should be recognized that the Department of Defense and the Military Services have chosen to assign the responsibility for conducting computerized simulations of US and Soviet force interactions to staff organizations other than intelligence. It does not follow that the functions of the DCI and CIA in the production of national intelligence should be constrained by the allocation of staff functions to non-intelligence organizations which the DoD finds suitable to its needs. In concept and in practice, interaction analyses, or net assessments conducted by intelligence, assist in evaluating alternative policies, forces and conduct of foreign nations using as a given, US policies, forces and plans. Policymaking and defense planning organizations conduct interaction analyses or net assessments to evaluate alternative US policies, forces and courses of action using as a given, intelligence estimates of likely foreign developments.

**Question:** "Could you envision a working group composed of representatives of OSD, the JCS and the intelligence community producing net assessments?"

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Answer: Such a working group to produce national level net assessments for use in US policymaking and defense planning can be envisioned and has been advocated by the previous DCI. In this connection, for the past two years DCI representatives have been participants in a net assessment of US and Soviet strategic nuclear forces conducted by the Studies, Analysis and Gaming Agency (SAGA), Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but only nominally. Results of the SAGA simulations of US and Soviet strategic nuclear force interactions have not been regarded by either the JCS or the Secretary of Defense as national level net assessments of the strategic balance. If there were a decision to produce such national level assessments, the effort ought to be managed by a third party, perhaps the NSC staff, with the representatives of the DCI and the Secretary of Defense acting as equal partners.

Question: "What methods and models are appropriate? Does it make sense to provide results based on static comparisons which do not take into account operational factors?"

Answer: There are no combinations of static or dynamic comparisons of quantitative and qualitative measures of military forces that can accurately depict balances of military power. Such measures bear on perceptions of the relationship of forces and trends in force characteristics applicable to specific missions, but do not measure total military capabilities. Similarly, the most complex simulations of the interaction of military forces, such as simulations of full, two-sided nuclear exchanges, involve simplifying assumptions and do not quantify or take into account all operational factors. The results of quantitative and qualitative comparisons and simulations of force interactions must be combined with objective fact not amenable to quantification and with expert judgment about what military forces can do.

The methods and models most appropriate to intelligence interaction analyses of Soviet and US forces, or net assessments, are those which replicate modern analytical techniques used by the Soviets in assessing the balance of military power--nuclear or conventional. Until sufficient data is available for such replications, intelligence must continue to depict the implications of developments in Soviet forces and capabilities using measures of effectiveness and analytical techniques similar to those used by the Department of Defense.

Question: "Is it possible to provide comparisons which are not biased in one way or another?"

Answer: It is possible. Institutional, policy or planning bias can be reflected in comparisons by the selection of the capabilities or forces to be compared. For example, any one comparison of US and Soviet offensive forces--hard target destruction potential, total megatonnage, equivalent megatonnage

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or residual destructive potential--standing alone can be interpreted as reflecting some type of bias. For that reason, comparisons of US and Soviet forces in both DoD and intelligence issuances contain a number of comparisons which in the aggregate, provide insights into the strategic balance. In general, comparisons of like forces such as total numbers of strategic offensive weapons convey only broad perceptions of relative military power; comparisons of interacting forces, such as bombers and opposing air defenses, convey more meaningful measures of military potential.

**Question:** "How should data about our own military forces and political actions be used by analysts?"

**Answer:** As explained above, analysts must use knowledge about US policies, intentions, forces and capabilities as an important element in interaction models upon which estimates are based.

**Question:** "Do they receive adequate information about US military and political subjects?"

**Answer:** Many CIA intelligence analysts by virtue of constant interaction with policymaking organizations, such as analysts producing economic and political estimates, are well informed about US policies and programs. Analysts and managers responsible for production of technical assessments of foreign weapons and estimates of the capabilities of foreign military forces must make a concerted effort to maintain knowledge of the latest developments in US plans and forces. For security reasons, access to detailed information about US military plans and capabilities, such as details about the US Strategic Integrated Operations Plan and US submarine operations, must be severely restricted. CIA analysts are not always fully informed about such details, but are assisted in the production of national intelligence by the participation of knowledgeable military analysts in the preparation process.

**Question:** "Should these be incorporated into products?"

**Answer:** Intelligence estimates are not the proper media for informing intelligence users about US policies, military forces, plans and capabilities. Frequently, however, intelligence estimates must contain explicit references to US policies and programs in assessing foreign reactions to them, and to future US forces when used to depict the implications of future forces and capabilities of adversaries. In general, intelligence producers should be explicit about the US element in their estimates whenever it is important to the understanding of the basis for their conclusions.

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